Evan Stark

13. Sociology as Social Work: A Case of Mis-Taken Identity

I am the only one contributing to this symposium who has made a strategic decision to distance himself from academic sociology. Worse, I made this decision after finishing a Ph.D. with Terence Hopkins at Binghamton. Before you decide this makes my giving this paper mean-spirited, let me add three caveats. First, I consider the peculiar combination of political activism, professional education, and writing that I *do* do is sociology. Secondly, what I understand about sociology is partially a product of what the literary critic Harold Bloom calls "deliberate misreading," i.e., of projecting paternal characteristics onto Hopkins (as well as onto Hans Gerth, Kurt Wolff, Maurice Stein, and other "father" figures in my educational family) and then interpreting (distorting, Bloom would insist) their wisdom through Oedipal ambivalence. But most important, Hopkins's greatest impact on me was personal rather than intellectual or political. Hopkins taught me how to be wrong and, in enhancing my capacity for mistakes, probably had as much influence in how I think (and by extension what I permit myself to think about) as anyone I have known.

To give my personal gratitude an intellectual rationale, my experience with sociology in the 1960s and 1970s will be a jumping-off point to think out loud about a political crisis we face in the Battered Women's movement and about how misreading Hopkins helped me find a way out. Like the crises that periodically overtake capitalism, the crisis I'm referring to is the result of success. Some twenty years ago, when a small group of us in New Haven helped found one of the country's first shelters, the problem of women-battering was relatively invisible, at least on the public agenda. There was no evidence the problem was widespread. There were no public funds to support services. And virtually every institution charged with protection, support, or education—police, medicine, the law, social work, the university—either disregarded the problem (at best) or responded to it in ways that reinforced the norms governing male domination in interpersonal life. Since then, a revolution has occurred in how we treat male violence against women that is, so far as how many people it affects and how profoundly, as far-reaching as the collapse of the Soviet thanatopolis or the liberation of South Africa. Turn your TVs to any soap or prime time docudrama and you will see what I mean. For the first time the popular media draw our eyes to the bruises women suffer rather than to the bruiser. From football star to minister to teacher of the year, all manner of cultural icons are brought low as violence against women becomes the litmus test for male responsibility. Reality is not too far behind public fantasy. Last year, over a million men were arrested for domestic violence crimes. Our shelters served well over a million women and twice this number of children. Women who killed their abusers have been pardoned in a dozen states. Thousands of men have entered "treatment" for acts that were the very essence of machismo when I was in high school. More money will be spent by the federal government to protect women from male violence in the next few years—well over one billion dollars—than in the entire history of the world. With success like this, how can we think of failure?

A revolution, yes. But the revolution has stalled. Despite the massive arrests of batterers—"social control" to the pure among you—virtually no one is going to jail. Imagine that one of your neighbors

has assaulted you or a member of your family. Now imagine that he does so repeatedly, dozens of times. Some of these assaults are quite serious. And on these occasions you call the police. But most are not life-threatening—he punches you or kicks you or knocks you down on the ground or simply squeezes your arm a little too tightly. Now put this guy in your bedroom or simply give him your phone number, a key to the house, and the right periodically to take your children. The law treats each of his attacks as a separate episode. So, unless you are severely injured, little is done and he is home again within hours of each arrest. I think you get the idea. The men we are arresting for domestic violence crimes *average* 14 prior violence-related complaints to the police, almost all involving the same woman. Despite this, each episode of domestic violence is treated as a second-class misdemeanor, somewhat below being drunk or disorderly.

Shelter, yes, but only for women who fit the prevailing view of victims, women who are on the run or have been hurt severely or who stoically carry their black eyes and bruises. Most women who retaliate are still going to jail. Serious violence as reported by women and men seems to be down; but minor acts—like hitting or punching or grabbing—are way up, and so are domestic homicides, at least as a proportion of all homicides. At best, treatment works with a small minority of batterers; at worst, as research by the Urban Institute shows, men who complete such programs are actually more likely than men who get no treatment to assault their wives again. This may seem like small potatoes, particularly if you believe that structural constraints shape events, not piddling reforms. But this is a crisis for those of us who have exhausted a good deal of our lives fighting this all too concrete actualization of female oppression. And the crisis goes deeper still: although hundreds of thousands of volunteers, service professionals, researchers, and policy makers are deeply invested in the movement, there is little public discussion of what we are about or, any longer, about the essential experience of oppression that defines the women we presumably serve.

Now, I want to back away from our identity crisis as a movement to reconstruct the attempts to forge an identity as a sociologist that brought

me together with Hopkins. I was first "exposed" to Hopkins when he and Wallerstein were teaching a class on world-systems at Columbia. It was 1967 and I was a Visiting Lecturer at CCNY in Sociology. A mutual friend and Ph.D. student of Hopkins, Al Szymanski, one of the few in the sociology melodrama whose character lifted him above the maudlin pretensions of the field, told me there was this genius Hopkins I just had to hear. So I went to their classroom, though I was somewhat embarrassed to come in late and another faculty member to boot. The room was filled—and then some—and I squeezed off to the side and onto a radiator. Then I saw the board, covered end to end with squares and lines and names, half on the lines and in the squares and, in any case, largely unintelligible. And one was talking and pacing and the other writing or pointing. Periodically, the roles were reversed, though this makes the actual division of labor sound better defined than it was. Frequently, for instance, the pointer would also talk and the pacer would ... well, just pace or the writer would forget to write, or they would both talk and point and write and pace at the same time. It was, as my grandmother once explained about sex, "when two are as one."

The only analogous experience I can think of is this. As an undergraduate, I audited a class at Brandeis in the philosophy of science taught by Sidney Morgenbesser who was visiting from Columbia. Herbert Marcuse was also sitting in and, after a few sessions, I turned and asked him what the guy was talking about. Marcuse looked down and whispered in his quite audible and unmistakable grumble, "Ach Schtark, zis man puts his worrds in alphabetical order." This was what I thought about Wallerstein and Hopkins. Unfortunately, I never completed the course. After 4 or 5 sessions, a group of us were arrested for blocking CIA recruiters and I was told that, as an "outsider," I wasn't welcome on campus. So, out of respect for Szymanski and the other SDSers who had staked a peculiar middle-ground ("Let the students decide!") between the position of the student government ("Defend the CIA's free speech") and us "ultra"-leftists, I stayed away and missed the finale.

Thirteen years later, Hopkins and I met again. This time the scene

was a cocktail party at the ASA Convention, my last, in 1980, and after a brief conversation, possibly under the influence, he proposed that I finish my degree at Binghamton. I would have to sign up for a few independent study courses, write a few papers in lieu of comprehensive exams and, of course, do a dissertation. But there was no requirement that I actually be on campus. Looking back, the offer seems crazy. At the time though, it seemed no crazier than anything else that was going on—indeed, by comparison, an act of great rationality, humanity, and trust.

There were some very positive things about Binghamton. I had worked with some of the "Facing Reality" followers of C.L.R. James in Detroit and was briefly in a study group with Johnny Watson and other members of The League of Revolutionary Black Workers. So I had enormous respect for Geschwender, one of the few American intellectuals who had seen the organization of Black auto workers as a serious alternative to the antics of the Black Panther Party. The few graduate students I knew in the program were smart as all get go, and book Marxists to boot. Though humor would not be considered their strong suit, my own state of academic limbo was not that funny. So I accepted the offer. Besides, my mother was putting pressure on me to "get this thing over with and get on with your life."

The fact was that my previous experiences as a student had not been very successful. I had left Washington University in St. Louis because of an unfortunate altercation in which the Department Chair, Alvin Gouldner, got physical. Since Gouldner was well-known as one of the great bastards of the profession, the details of our disagreement are less relevant than the fact that the whole scene felt like a novel by Erving Goffman. Symptomatic was that eight of the twelve faculty in the Department had graduated from Stuveyesant High School in the Bronx and related to one another as if they were still playground warriors. An exception was the anthropologist Jules Henry. Famous for uncovering anxiety among an Indian tribe in Brazil, along with Lee Rainwater, he directed a field project at the Pruitt-Igo Housing complex. Henry's theory was that the lives of the project families were governed by the "death instinct" and he instructed his Black graduate

students to uncover the instinct through interviews with the families. To avoid this humiliating task but not lose the assistantships several depended on to support families, we spent hours constructing family interviews from memories that resembled the actual scenes more than Henry's projections. And so it went, until the day Gouldner informed me with his usual savoir-faire "Stark, you can get 'A's' up the ass, but you'll never get a degree here."

When I came to Hopkins's class in 1967, I was coordinating a left coalition headquartered at the Free University in the Village. Calling ourselves "The Revolutionary Contingent," we collected money for guns during the Newark riot, showed nightly films in Harlem celebrating the Liberation armies in Viet Nam and published a magazine called *Treason*—"Do you subscribe to *Treason?*"—that included Che Guevera on its editorial board. Juan Valdes was on the front cover smiling and holding out an open can of coffee to a gringo. On the back, it was revealed that the can contained bullets. It took all of my managerial skills to keep the coalition together when one faction—the Sparticist League I think—insisted we picket the Russian embassy behind the slogan "Give the H-Bomb to Hanoi." And so it went.

I managed to finish an M.A. at Wisconsin under Hans Gerth who made me study Max Weber like Talmud. But my stay there also ended dramatically. In the fall of 1967, police rioted against an antiwar demonstration and the ring leaders, myself included, were sent into exile which, in my case, meant Canada. The next year, I returned to graduate school at Minnesota, but my stay there ended quickly when the FBI visited campus and enlisted, according to my FBI file, the enthusiastic cooperation of several departmental patriots. Several years later, one of the chief agents assigned to my case, this one by army intelligence, met me at "Mama's Pizza" in Minneapolis to confess his sins, including preventing my wife and me from finding work and getting a bank account. Later, I even tried a correspondence school, the Union Graduate School, connected to Antioch, designed for mid-career iconoclasts who wanted Ph.D. next to their names. But the school required a one-month briefing in Sarasota, Florida. With no prescience of disaster, the students appointed me their representative

to the faculty hiring committee. In my zeal to fulfill my charge, I communicated the contents of an overtly racist letter the faculty had written to one of the applicants and that was that.

So you can see why the prospect of a degree without having to endure the social trials of campus life attracted me. When Hopkins and I actually met in 1980, I was a researcher at Yale where, so the slogan went, "you know your friends because they're the ones who stab you in the front." I was working on a study with Anne Flitcraft, my wife and a physician, who had discovered in her medical thesis that injuries due to women battering were far more common than anyone thought. But once the research took off and we got multiyear funding from NIMH, Anne returned to her medical training, leaving me in charge of the research team, a classically trained theoretician trying to interpolate data from 3600 medical records, many of them volumes thick. Now, it had come time to write all this up. Perhaps Hopkins, or someone else at Binghamton, could help me figure out what I was looking at.

There was no lack of intellectual companionship at Yale. I had been working with a network of radical academics (called the Health Marxist Organization or "HMO" for short) on a theoretical approach to health as a sociopolitical process we called "materialist epidemiology." In addition, I was hosting several Italian sociology professors from Padua and Turin at Yale. In exile from their homeland and family because of an Italian government crackdown (with full cooperation of the Italian C.P.) on "new" left groups after the kidnap-murder of Aldo Maro by the Red Brigades, they formed the core of a study group on *Capital* that met in the basement (literally) of my building for several years.

These anecdotal images should convey a sense of sociology as it was actually lived in the 1960s and 1970s and of how unusual it was, in this world, to encounter someone like Hopkins for whom respect came as second nature. I quickly came up against the passive-aggressive Hopkins who would wait four months after a chapter, then send a few scribbled paragraphs. In the few political conversations we had, he described his philosophy as "Stalinism with a human face" and, apart

from Szymanski, we took our intellectual idols, let me just say, from different sides of the aisle. But I never once had second thoughts about the man. Perhaps this is because, unlike some other students of his, I was pretty much made intellectually when we met and, in any case, was too stubborn to change my life's direction without a struggle that was more than either of us had time for.

If Hopkins and I never argued, this was because I feel an enormous affinity for him personally and I believe the feeling was mutual. Like him, underlying my intellectual energy was a lack of self-confidence. The trip to Binghamton was far longer than the distance from New Haven. Here I was, Yale researcher and political mentor, turned to student, made to feel small and alone, to wait on the edge of doorways for faculty to look up and give me a precious moment of acknowledgement, having to endure barbs that were alternately wiseass or downright nasty from faculty who felt they could treat me like the doubloon hung on the deck of the Pequod in *Moby Dick,* free-associating their political fantasies without consequence.

Lest this sound melodramatic, let me illustrate. On my initial tour of the department, I met Dale Tomich who had briefly been one of my "bodyguards" at Madison. Dale is one of the sweetest and most gentle men I know. So the memory of his having to ward off right-wing thugs had mainly symbolic significance—that he could protect me here, where I would need only intellectual karate. Little did I suspect. That night Phil McMichael had a small reception at his house and someone, who shall remain unnamed lest he be nominated for higher office, passed me a joint. In turn, I offered it to a dark-haired faculty member who then pounced like a tiger. I was, this expert on Latin radicalism declared, "the embodiment of everything disgusting about the New Left ...." I withdrew the offer of the joint. But he would not be salved. Instead, his assault grew in both detail and intensity, careening from dope and sex to a potpourri of political positions he had found offensive over the years, almost none of them my own, until, having worked himself into spasmodic rage, he seized me and tried to throw me down the stairs. Several years later, in my clinical internship at the National Centers for Post-Traumatic Stress

Disorder, I realized that antiwar activists could suffer a syndrome of disassociated rage very much like the suffering of soldiers exposed to wartime atrocities. At the time, however, the greeting was devastating. Then, soon thereafter and completely without warning, I received a vicious letter from a woman on my Ph.D. committee whom I had recruited for a faculty job and believed to be my long-term friend. The essence of her resignation was that my working on domestic violence research was a "travesty" because, she recalled, I had laughed at a sexist joke at a dinner we shared in Amsterdam eight years earlier.

In sum, despite the formal generosity of the Binghamton arrangement, I felt no less at risk there than I had in other sociological encounters. Amidst all this, Hopkins remained unflappable and was there whenever I needed him. He reached out of what felt like an emotional void and kept me standing, treating me as a colleague who had some catching up to do, as an equal or more even, as someone from whom he might learn, his very studied way of making you think things through out loud. Even his feigned (and not so feigned) administrative incompetence made me feel empowered somehow: if this guy could get through the red-tape, I could too. I visited his home only on a few occasions, but that too made me feel whole, even as I suspected (puritanically) that the evening cocktail was one too many. Until then, I had encountered his and Gloria Hopkins's generosity of spirit only among a certain type of German refugee intellectual—Marcuse, Hans Gerth and Kurt Wolff. It made all the difference. I could not have been a humane teacher without him.

The work I did under Hopkins's guidance was a theoretical overview and empirical summary of data on 3600 randomly sampled women who had presented with injuries at Yale-New Haven Hospital during a single year. Although it took 400 pages of theorizing about the nature of medicine before I actually started discussing the evidence, the most dramatic finding was that domestic violence was the leading cause of female injury. This astounding discovery was possible only because we had approached injury from a perspective that was diametrically opposed to medicine's own. The prevailing medical view is that adult injury is accidental unless otherwise specified and that,

as a consequence, apart from falls among the elderly, auto accidents are far and away the most important cause of serious adult injury. By assuming that all injuries to women result from social agency unless proved otherwise, we were able to reframe a range of euphemistic medical observations (such as "kicked with foot" or "hit with ashtray") to reveal that battering caused more injuries than auto accidents, rapes, and muggings combined.

In addition to injury, we identified the fact that, following a reported episode of abuse, battered women disproportionately suffered a range of other physical problems, including rape, and were far more likely than controls to suffer depression, attempt suicide, abuse alcohol and drugs, and to express concern about child abuse. These problems—as well as repeated injury—reflected the fact that they had become "entrapped" in these relationships. The question was why? This is the enigma of woman battering I spent the next decade trying to resolve. No other class of victims, including men assaulted by their female partners, become entrapped or develop a similar "syndrome" of medical, psychosocial, or behavioral problems as a result of assault. The dominant explanation is that both a woman's entrapment and her multiple problems have psychological roots in the trauma represented by severe violence. In the seminal statement, Lenore Walker (1979) describes a "Battered Woman's Syndrome" defined by two components, a "cycle of violence" during which women are seduced into remaining with abusive men and a resulting pattern of "learned helplessness" when the victim accepts the abuse as the framework to which she has to adapt. No more proof is needed of the inadequacy of this formulation than this: last year alone, more than a million women in the U.S. sought refuge in battered women's shelters, millions called the police, sought protection orders, left their abusers, and so forth.

Like several other great teachers, Hans Gerth and Maurice Stein to name two, Hopkins is a parenthetical genius who communicates brilliantly when he can free associate around a relatively limited external object, as in letters or conversations. In one of those maddeningly suggestive notes others have referred to, Hopkins called our approach to this enigma of battering a "political psychology of social institutions."

And in so doing, he helped us bring our method to consciousness. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative analyses of the medical response to women over time, I argued that it was not "male violence" that caused women's entrapment in battering relationships, but rather the implicit support their project of domination received from an institutional process intrinsic to the helping services, a process that gave direction and coherence to the inappropriate and punitive clinical response "behind the back" of clinicians. In effect, the persistent attempts by battered women to present the consequences of their *social* situation took the medical paradigm to its limits and forced it to adapt a range of defensive maneuvers (from inappropriate medication and labeling through punitive hospitalizations) whose consequence was to reconstitute the deteriorating patriarchy—as an "extended patriarchy"—that included the helping "services." Thus medical intervention was a critical factor in the disablement process it recorded. I had the data to empirically ground my claims and did a textual case analysis to show how medicine's response and women's problems developed in tandem.

This was pretty much where we left things for about a decade. I was at a crossroads in my career: sociology or *social* work? My career path was already too skewed for the Ivy League. At Yale, whether in the mundane policy discussions that accompanied our morning chopped liver at the Institution for Social and Policy Studies, the "Feminist" faculty study group hastily formed to avoid the stigma of not being PC, or in the PM seminars with Eco, Derrida, Apter, Cornell West, Jamison, and the others, what I did when I was not pontificating post-positivism was slumming, pure and simple. But I clearly had the base for a solid life as a mid-level sociologist. Still, access to so large a data set was inseparable from the accidental privileges associated with Yale and this was a potentially powerful weapon in the struggle to legitimate key political claims in the Women's movement. We continued to publish essays reiterating the links between violence and its consequences for women. But pursuing the theoretical leads—the "political psychology of social institutions"—took a back seat to reforming the criminal justice, medical, and social service response

around principles of safety for women and children and accountability for batterers. As my decision became clearer—to others, then later to myself—Hopkins's letters recommending me for this job or that became increasingly ambivalent.

Hopkins's skepticism from afar seemed misplaced. Our success was extraordinary. Here was a Hopkins dissertation cited by Presidents, Surgeons General, and Senators and impacting professional practice far beyond the medical arena. The dollars flowed. As important, built around media images of physical abuse which we helped to legitimate, the shelters, hospitals, police, and other services constructed an array of emergency interventions that highlighted safety. Meanwhile, as Hopkins might have warned, the initial liberatory impetus of the Battered Woman's movement was muted behind an increasingly respectable emphasis on "service."

Only gradually has it become clear that a central tenet in our research was wrong. Physical violence is neither the cause of woman battering nor is it, as we implied, the hub of male domination. This was apparent as I left sociology for forensic work where I had to reframe the same stories I had heard in the shelter movement or whose fragments I had read on the medical charts to defend women against murder charges or in civil cases, to claim liability or custody.

Earlier, Cedric Robinson recalled Hopkins's insight that exhibitions of raw power symbolize the end rather than the zenith of domination. The resort to violence is expensive, inefficient, and always invites a test of prowess at which women lose much less frequently than most people suspect. A central thesis in our earliest essay, "Medicine and Patriarchal Violence" (1979), was that battering evolved from an idiosyncratic to a *social* behavior (requiring "regulation" in the Foucauldian sense) only as capitalist development combined with the self-activity of women to undermine the domestic basis of male authority. What has gradually become clear, largely from learning how to listen more closely to what battered women are telling us, is that violence is actually a less salient dimension of battering—and ultimately, less consequential—than a range of strategies men employ to isolate, intimidate, and wrest control away from their partners, a pattern we call "coercive control."

These strategies fill the experiential spaces between abusive episodes, constraining women's behavior at the micro levels of how they eat, cook, dress, talk on the phone, shop, account for their money, what they watch on TV, whom they see, how, when, where and with whom they have sex, their relationships with family, friends, workmates, and so forth. Despite our social constructionist approach, our sensitivity to the role of institutional structures in defining personal fate, and our emphasis on the emancipatory dimensions of women's experience, we had inadvertently succumbed to an essentialist fallacy in which male violence became a fetish, as it is in much so-called "radical" feminist work, that replaced a more textured understanding of dominance.

We had, I now believe, been led astray not so much by theory per se, but by the fantastic notion that good sociology can exist apart from social work, that it can be abstracted from the ongoing process of political struggle without losing its historical relevance, that it is possible to understand change without trusting its possibilities, without becoming intimate with its agents and perhaps becoming an agent oneself. From our first visits to the shelters, women had been showing and telling us in numerous ways that they were not "victims" or, more exactly, that the victimized state in which we found them was a transitional status imposed to quash an affirmative subjectivity. I am using subjectivity here as Marx does in the famous Section Six of *Capital* Volume I, to refer to the affirmation of one's capacities against the frustrating reduction of those capacities, their inefficient exploitation, and in the case of women their subordination to "gender," that occurs in the labor process, extended here to the process of "domesticity."

As astounding as it was to discover the extent to which our mothers and sisters and daughters and neighbors had been physically brutalized by the men in their lives, by us, it is more astounding still to learn that what millions of women are suffering is not an assault crime but a *liberty* crime whose proportions are intelligible only when we step outside our own experience as men—there are no parallels—and embrace the historical specificity of women's difference. Legally, the issue is not "equal protection" (the 14th Amendment), but a status akin

to "indentured servitude." Medically, the problem is not the periodic physical emergency accommodated by psychological or behavioral dysfunction. The problem is the ongoing crisis of diminished access to the basic material and social foundations of selfhood. The problem is not what domestic violence costs women in suffering, but what it means to deprive so many families, communities, and nation states of the creative capacities of so many citizens. Politically, the issue is "freedom" not "safety," justice rather than mere accountability.

So where in all this is our friend? Ironically, every facet of Hopkins's intellectual life seems opposed to what occasioned our shift in framework, his commitment to grand theory, to model building, his faith in systems as metaphors for reality, his dogged interest in first causes, his idealist commitment to vanguard political organizing. Hopkins believes in history largely because it illustrates what we cannot accomplish, i.e., how limited are our possibilities. I have always embraced a central tenet of the New Left—dramatized in May of 1968—that the limits imposed by history are a matter of "we shall see." But the negative corollary was this: it is never sufficient to simply do "good." You may not recall that the SDS Weathermen refused to tip because they believed it kept waitresses from struggling against low wages. Any attempt to reduce misery—this is the mission of social workers after all—distracts us from the larger task, to eliminate the underlying conditions responsible for misery in the first place.

As I've said, Hopkins was personally opposed to my abandoning academic sociology as a discipline and as a career, even somewhat disdainful I think. And yet, he made it possible for me to accept the transition from understanding "Right" to "doing the right thing," a lesson that led me ultimately to social work school and the idea that benevolence could be disciplined in the same way as playing a piano. More, Hopkins helped me discover that, for me at least, it is only in doing the Right thing, in immersing myself day in and day out in the microdynamics of personal suffering and resistance, that I can sustain a life devoted to intellectual rigor, political honesty, justice, and freedom. Through their examples, other mentors of my generation showed me how to link humanity to political thinking, Paul

Goodman, a close friend, Marcuse, Norman Mailer, James Baldwin, even Malcolm. But I was better prepared to learn this lesson when I met Hopkins, perhaps because I had children to whose futures I was responsible, and so could take what he probably had little intention of giving, that doing good is as worthy a basis for intellectual life as any other. By approaching me person to person, as if sociological talk was no more but no less than a statement of being, Hopkins allowed me to glimpse the fear and trembling that shaped his own coming to intellectual maturity. Yet here he was without apology or mask.

From this encounter, it was a short step to the second lesson, that the essence of creative growth is making mistakes, that being wrong is not merely something to endure in embarrassed silence but to seek out and welcome, like a good lover. I hope this no longer sounds like a back-handed compliment. Watch your children on the computer. They learn how to use it by hitting the wrong keys—suddenly the screen goes blank or something completely unexpected appears. For them, the computer is part of their reflexivity, their sense of what is possible for them grows as something accidental takes them beyond what they know. For too many of us, when the screen goes blank, even momentarily, there is a sense of emptiness, of loss, of approval withdrawn, a failure which can paralyze us, drive us into gothic cathedrals where one genius stands on the shoulders of the next as in a giant confidence game. Hopkins left me with a faith that if I was thoughtful and planful about what I did—in my personal life, in my clinical work, in my political work, in my writing—and it went wrong, so good, I understood something new, I was something new, someone who had made mistakes and could move on, a survivor. Then, I learned how to love women who had made onehellava big mistake in their choice of men who severely hurt them and were survivors too. I understand that for them, as for me, as for Hopkins, surviving is an act of courage and creativity.

In the years since the cocktail party at which we met, I have learned to bounce off mistakes in my marriage, in the low priority I had placed on children, in my fathering, in my theoretical framework, in my choice of emphasis, in my political rhetoric. When Chaney,

Goodman, and Mickey Schwerner were killed in Mississippi, my black brothers and sisters in the civil rights movement taught me to sing through pain. I learned from Hopkins that I could celebrate wrong turns in my intellectual life and come away singing. And so, I believe, I can communicate this same sense of creative possibility to and about the women whose lives seem to them so utterly disassembled. Hopkins helped me get over being afraid of losing, something I try to communicate to my children and my students.

Let me reiterate. I am describing Hopkins's subjectivity, the frustrated capacity he communicated, you may recall what one of my Italian comrades would term his "intentionality." It was not what Hopkins actually said to me that mattered, not his educational program nor even his parenthetical letters, but what he is (and now what he was), a style of being alive, a magical dance he does with his body or with you or with parts of who he was that had failed him, or weren't there to begin with, a dance in which he laughs, turning away just enough to help you see it is not you he is laughing at, but *us*.

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Contents

Immanuel Wallerstein ix
Introduction

I. Graduate Education: The Formation of Scholars

Walter L. Goldfrank 3
1. Deja Voodoo All Over Again: Rereading the Classics

William G. Martin 9
2. Opening Graduate Education: Expanding the Hopkins Paradigm

Ravi Arvind Palat 27
3. Terence Hopkins and the Decolonization of World-Historical Studies

Immanuel Wallerstein 35
4. Pedagogy and Scholarship

II. Methods of World-Historical Social Science

Reşat Kasaba 43
5. Studying Empires, States, and Peoples: Polanyi, Hopkins, and Others

Richard E. Lee 51
6. Thinking the Past/Making the Future: Methods and Purpose in World-Historical Social Science

Philip McMichael 57
7. The Global Wage Relations as an Instituted Market

Elizabeth McLean Petras 63
8. Globalism Meets Regionalism: Process versus Place

Beverly Silver 83
9. The Time and Space of Labor Unrest

III. Scholars and Movements

Rod Bush 89
10. Hegemony and Resistance in the United States: The Contradictions of Race and Class

Nancy Forsythe 101
11. Theorizing About Gender: The Contributions of Terence K. Hopkins

Lu Aiguo 115
12. From Beijing to Binghamton and Back: A Personal Reflection on the Trajectory of Chinese Intellectuals

Evan Stark 127
13. Sociology as Social Work: A Case of Mis-Taken Identity

Terence K. Hopkins 143
14. Coda

Mohammad H. Tamdgidi 145
The Utopistics of Terence K. Hopkins, Twenty Years Later: A Postscript

Colloquium Photos 169

About the Contributors 193

Terence K. Hopkins Bibliography 205

Index 309

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